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JAPAN: ADJUSTING TO A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

ANNCR:

JAPAN -- A HIGHLY INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRY, TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON THE EXCHANGE OF FINISHED-GOODS EXPORTS FOR IMPORTS OF RAW MATERIALS AND ENERGY -- HAS HAD TO MAKE FOREIGN-POLICY ADJUSTMENTS IN THE CHANGING INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT. VOA'S JOSEPH SULLIVAN EXAMINES ONE EXPERT'S VIEWS OF THIS PHENOMENON, THE OPINIONS OF ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY'S PROFESSOR SHELDON SIMON, AS PUBLISHED IN THE MAGAZINE, "ASIAN SURVEY."

VOICE:

JAPAN, PROFESSOR SIMON WRITES, IS STILL VERY MUCH CONCERNED WITH TRADITIONAL REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES AND THE MAINTENANCE OF STABLE RELATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS. BUT, HE SAYS, TOKYO HAS INCREASINGLY FOCUSED ON SUCH KNOTTY ISSUES AS MAINTAINING STABLE RAW-MATERIAL AND ENERGY SUPPLIES AT ACCEPTABLE PRICES, DETERMINING THE BEST LOCATIONS FOR OVERSEAS INVESTMENT, AND DEMARCATING THOSE ENERGY SUPPLY ROUTES LEAST VULNERABLE TO POLITICAL OR MILITARY INTERFERENCE. AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAYS, JAPANESE CONCERN FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH ALL ITS ECONOMIC PARTNERS ACCOUNTS FOR THE DE-EMPHASIS OF MILITARY ASPECTS OF TOKYO'S SECURITY POLICY. JAPAN, PROFESSOR SIMON SAYS, STILL PREFERS TO RELY ON THE UNITED STATES FOR ITS MILITARY PROTECTION RATHER THAN ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ITS OWN CREDIBLE FORCE.

PROFESSOR SIMON SAYS JAPAN FACES A NUMBER OF POTENTIAL SECURITY PROBLEMS. THESE INCLUDE THE SINO-SOVIET DISPUTE; HOSTILITY BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA; THE GROWTH OF SOVIET AND CHINESE NAVAL POWER IN OCEANS THROUGH WHICH JAPANESE COMMERCE MUST PASS; AND

REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN COUNTRIES WHICH SUPPLY VITAL RAW MATERIALS AND NATURAL RESOURCES TO JAPAN. THERE'S NO QUESTION, HE WRITES, THAT TO THE JAPANESE, THE SOVIET UNION REPRESENTS THE GREATEST POTENTIAL MILITARY THREAT.

A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO MORE RELAXED RELATIONS BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE SOVIET UNION IS THE DISPOSITION OF THE FOUR NORTHERN ISLANDS OFF HOKKAIDO WHICH THE SOVIET UNION TOOK CONTROL OF AT THE END OF WORLD WAR TWO. THAT OBSTACLE, PROFESSOR SIMON PREDICTS, IS LIKELY TO PERSIST FOR SOME TIME. JAPAN HAS INSISTED ON THE REVERSION OF THE NORTHERN ISLANDS SINCE THE EARLY 1950'S. BUT THE SOVIET UNION HAS COLONIZED AND INTEGRATED THEM INTO ITS EAST ASIAN DEFENSE SYSTEM. (OPT) PROFESSOR SIMON BELIEVES THAT SO LONG AS THE JAPANESE-AMERICAN SECURITY ALLIANCE REMAINS IN FORCE AND JAPAN IS CONTROLLED BY A CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT, THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO CHANCE FOR THE ISLANDS TO REVERT TO JAPAN. (END OPT)

AS FOR JAPANESE POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, PROFESSOR SIMON OBSERVES THAT THE AREA IS OF CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE TO JAPAN AS A MARKET FOR MANUFACTURED GOODS AND INCREASINGLY AS A LOCATION FOR JAPANESE INVESTMENTS.

JAPAN'S PRIMARY POLITICAL PROBLEM IN SOUTHEAST ASIA, IN PROFESSOR SIMON'S VIEW, IS ITS ECONOMIC DOMINANCE. (OPT) BY THE EARLY 1980'S, HE SAYS, JAPAN WILL HAVE TO TRANSFER SOME SIX THOUSAND MILLION DOLLARS ANNUALLY TO SOUTHEAST ASIA TO HELP COUNTRIES IN THE REGION FINANCE THEIR TRADE DEFICITS WITH JAPAN. BY THAT TIME, HE ADDS, JAPAN WILL BE SOUTHEAST ASIA'S LARGEST SUPPLIER OF CAPITAL AS WELL AS ITS SECOND MOST IMPORTANT MARKET FOR RAW MATERIALS AND MANUFACTURED GOODS. (END OPT)

JAPAN, PROFESSOR SIMON WRITES, HAS ENTERED AN ERA IN WHICH ITS ECONOMIC NEEDS FOR RESOURCES MUST BE BALANCED WITH A NEW

WILLINGNESS TO OPEN ITS MARKETS TO THE MANUFACTURED GOODS OF BOTH INDUSTRIALIZED AND DEVELOPING NATIONS. OTHERWISE, HE SAYS, LARGE JAPANESE TRADE SURPLUSES WILL INEVITABLY LEAD TO NEGATIVE REACTIONS ON THE PART OF JAPAN'S TRADING PARTNERS. BUT, IN ANY CASE, HE CONCLUDES, JAPAN WILL CONTINUE TO SEE ITS FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES AS LARGELY ECONOMIC IN NATURE.

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